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72-73

TOWER

72
73

STAFF

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This 1972-73 issue marks the fortieth anniversary of **The Tower.** We would like to dedicate this issue to those who will be responsible for bringing out future **Towers,** and hope that they will learn from the experience as we did.

POEM

old age sticks
up Keep
Off
signs)&

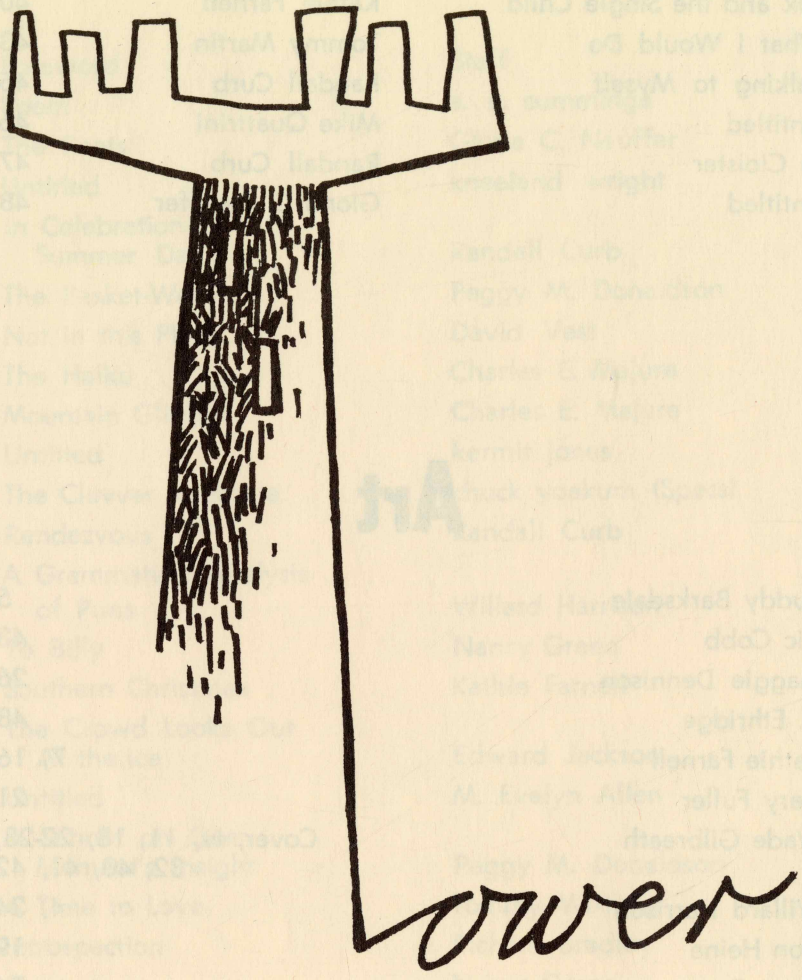
youth yanks them
down(old
age
cries No

Tres)&(pas)
youth laughs
(sing
old age

scolds Forbid
den Stop
Must
n't Don't
&)youth goes
right on
gr
owing old

e. e. cummings

(Reprinted from **The Montevallo Review,** 1951)


Tower

The Poets

I

A slow fire burns within,
Bursting forth at times
Into a torrent of words,
Searing the soul but leaving no ashes,
Only feeble echoes from the roar of their eruptions.

II

They dare to shout or whisper—
Saying what they must
In words that were chosen,
Each one a gem set in a crown of thorns.

Gloria C. Neuffer

peanut butter an' jelly
in my belly
ain't nothin' better
than to eat it down an' wet her
with milk.

kneeland wright '72

In Celebration of a Summer Day

The summer's like the melancholy clown
Who mocks our laughter after every show
And knows that we're the fools
Not he
And after we have long since ceased to be
He'll introduce the autumn's fey burlesque.

And yet I celebrate the summer day
The lazy bluejay's meretricious friend
Whose fiery eye remains so insincere.
I celebrate the prime of dragonflies,
The rhyme of Nature's speechless versifiers
Who sing to stay alive.
I celebrate this time of languid skies
That help the artless poet to survive;
And when the august thunder grumbles
In its round percussive mumble,
I celebrate the quenching
drenching
Of the fertile summer sons.

I wait . . . I wait
Attending on the summer's coming fate;
And when the storm has purged the thirsty land,
I'll have another time to celebrate.

Randall Curb

The Basket-Weaver

In and out—Out and in—
White oak strips from white oak trees
Weave the past to live again;
Wisdom comes from white oak trees.

Nimble fingers weave their beauty
Smooth with youth or wrinkled old.
One thing lasts from ancient duty;
Weave a history never told.

Weave the freedom of the mountains
From the forest's silent truth.
Weave the dreams dreamed on the mountain
By so many in their youth.

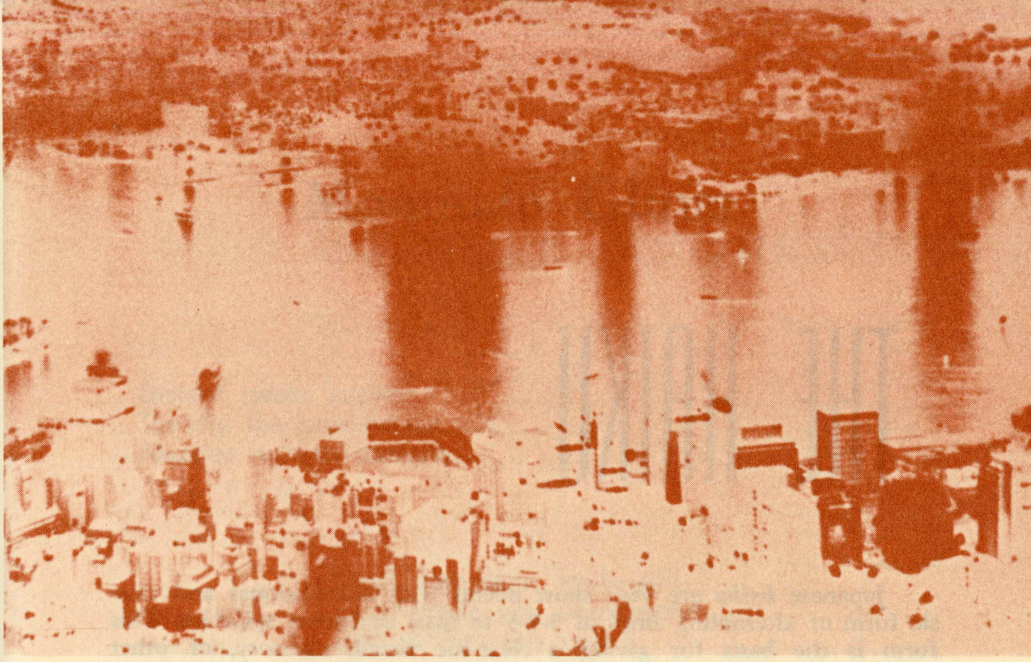
Weave the time as once it smiled
For those who knew the mountain's soul.
Weave survival undefiled
Of seven clans and ancient goals.

Weave the hopes of all our dreams
Weave the truth: We are alive:
Growing like the white oak trees:
Growing with an ancient strive.

Weave us wisdom of the past.
Weave our breathing of today.
Weave the strength to make us last.
Weave us strong minds that will stay.

In and out—Out and in—
White oak strips from white oak trees.
Weave the past to live again:
Wisdom comes from white oak trees.

Peggy M. Donaldson



Not in This Place

Where shall the word be found, where will the word
Resound? Not here, there is not enough silence.
T. S. Eliot

Searching
Groping
Yearning
The deafened masses tread aimlessly
Down the empty, sterile corridors of
Alpha and Omega,
You and I,
We and They,
to arrive in single file at this which the meek shall inherit.
From every walk,
Every plateau and talk of life
Come these, the abandoned, the forsaken masses
Wishing to hear and fearing to fear.
But these, the many, the You and I
Shall not partake of the words of the seer—
Not in this, or that, or any place—
No;
Not
Here.

David Vest

THE HAIKU

Japanese *haiku* are very short poems with a traditional and classic form of alternating lines of 5-7-5 to total seventeen syllables. This form is the basis for giving a clear-cut visual, auditory, or other sensual image, usually derived from an observation of nature, in order to reflect and to evoke the emotive responses of the reader. This briefest of verse forms is, at its best, a quintessentially condensed formula for an aesthetic experience, a verbal spell which will enable the reader, by imaginative collaboration with the words, to recreate in himself something of the poet's original moment of realization. Each true *haiku* is a swift record of one moment of *satori,* the sudden flash of enlightenment which grants a transcendent insight into the suchness of things. Behind the simplest natural observation of *haiku* lies the whole limitless universe of Zen. Here we have the substance of *Noh, ikebana,* and *cha-noyu* distilled into single precious drops.

While it is relatively easy to compose in English a poem in the traditional *haiku* form, because the phonemic and morphemic structures of English are similar to the Japanese, it is quite difficult to achieve the subtlety of conjunctive meaning so typical of *haiku,* because the English-language system of symbolic and lexical referants is so radically different from the Japanese. Consequently my own *haiku* claim only to serve as tributes to—not as examples of—these Japanese masterpieces in miniature.

Charles E. Majure

Mountain Glints

Distant peaks supine.
Timidly the bold-bright sun
Nuzzles to black breasts.

Strait fern-dank trail—Ah!
What made you unexpected
Halt in just this cove?

From white morning mists,
Anchored in a sea of foam
Juts one lone dark pine.

Once round that last turn—
The stone-smooth face of Whiteside
Scarred by water's roar!

Sunfall to nightrise:
Porch rockers tuned to echo
Sighing wind-harp song.

Charles E. Majure

the sound of the locust—
to signify the approaching of night.
they warn the frightened to run,
and seek their protection fast.

they continue to sing their song.
as it passes from tree to tree—
the wind whistles as the accompanist
and the dusk as their curtain.

and soon the poet's lover will come,
to sit beside him till dark.
then slowly slip away,
and find their love under light of the moon.

together they stealthily creep—
knowing not why they care so much.
maybe it is not themselves,
but the hypnosis of the locust's song.

but soon the locust quietens,
ceasing his familiar tune.
and at this pause the lovers waken—
to find themselves unknown to each.

so as strangers, they quickly depart.
not knowing why or if ever again—
still they yearn for that which they owned,
but lost in the ending of the locust's song.

kermit jones

The Cleuver Repuzzle

They one liffed a man anhis wive, what had hopped for a loong child, bup in vauge. Noe their were up thae backs off they hoose a liggle windoe who obersaw a beatifull gargoil ov the fivest vaggtables ann flour; bet ther waz a hugh wawll aroond it, an nobody peobles vultured intoit, fer it belogged to a which on grape night, ann of all the worled whom were afeared. Once day da wiff were starking at the windie, anne loogink intoe the garben, she sees a bed fulled wit the ravest champion(eben plants are promisuecue) ann she wissht fo sommgary moor, and soon she begag to lonng fog it gravely. This goes on fore, manny day? But soog her hubbie locked intoilet sagging, "What ails thee dear wift?"

"O," answered her, "Thou hast a shrp hoof on my very price rankion, kinbly remood it less I thrust thee a jab inn do mouth, dear hussman." (she larbs jockingly, not wishing to makk an enema ov her oun trues loffe)

"What ails thee daef wafe?", he he regreives.

"By thy speech I precieze thou arf a bladder oof well recount??" (edding slighly)

So it was thad the humpman desided to steal some of the very herb from a close nearby neighbore what limped closeby. The nearbor(witch) was wateing for he hwen him slimed overt the wail.

"Hohaaaaah", she hahaed, "You havv innered my privat garter, and noow it wille be the worss for youe!"

"O Bubble," he mubbled, "My dummp owld wipe wants your rumpion for a gfift, but I hatt or dislikk it. Would you nott more carr for an hour fist borde daugter?"

"Ide be delightful", she snotted," but only if she cann be clawed Rapuzzle!(a favorice namm in her falimy for genarators)

"It is agreek," he bagrained.

Only it was tooo soon that he wige gabe burp to a babies whom was verily yoong of years and . . .

Whooooooooosh! Off to the hulme of Goggle.(a par time lady in the street.) After wirk she would com home to grovel sweet grovel and heared Repubzle singing a kind of old flock songg.

"Rapuzzle, Repunggle! Throw doon you hair!(which was silly because Repuzzlr were a thritty years olld bald man) This sort of unrhyming quote was quiet annoiing to Rapoftle, so one evenings he erased the which and mooved to annumber of Grimes Fairly Tails.

chuck yoakum
(Specs)

Rendezvous

Edmund lives in a third story brownstone,
A pensive yet eager scholar,
He drinks his nonfat dry milk—
And listens to Mozart and Mahler.

He reads The Atlantic and Harper's
And visits his aunt once a week,
Plays Patience on Fridays till midnight—
And never has wanted to cheat.

Mavis lives in her West Side compartment
With a Photoplay right by her side,
She sips on a makeshift daiquiri—
And lets Sominex pills be her guide.

She eats chocolates and listens to Brubeck,
Wears rhinestones and counterfeit sable,
Hangs her stockings across a cracked mirror—
By an eight-by-ten glossy of Gable.

He keeps carrot sprouts in a back window
And prefers good Chianti to gin.
She raises an African violet
And buys perfume called My Paris Sin.

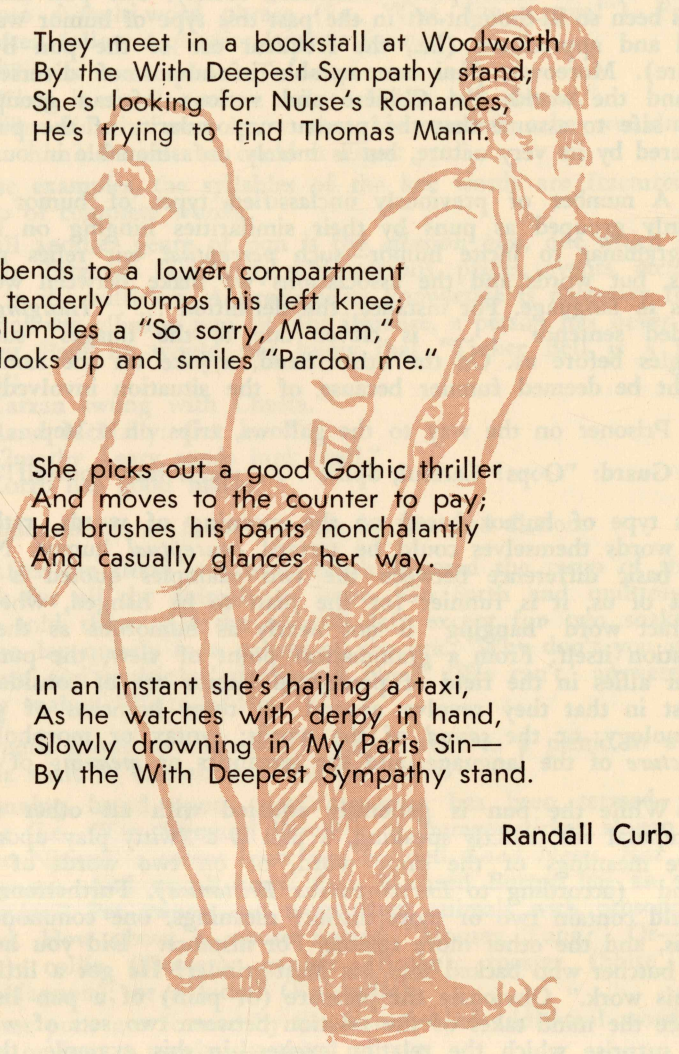
They meet in a bookstall at Woolworth
By the With Deepest Sympathy stand;
She's looking for Nurse's Romances,
He's trying to find Thomas Mann.

She bends to a lower compartment
And tenderly bumps his left knee;
He blumbles a "So sorry, Madam,"
She looks up and smiles "Pardon me."

She picks out a good Gothic thriller
And moves to the counter to pay;
He brushes his pants nonchalantly
And casually glances her way.

In an instant she's hailing a taxi,
As he watches with derby in hand,
Slowly drowning in My Paris Sin—
By the With Deepest Sympathy stand.

Randall Curb



A Grammatical Analysis of Puns

What is the least funny type of wit and humor? The pun, you may say. Indeed the pun is perhaps the least esteemed form of humor in the eyes of contemporary American society. The pun has not always been so ill-thought-of: in the past this type of humor was widely used and appreciated (i.e., the frequent use of the pun by Shakespeare). Moreover, puns are notable in humor of diverse peoples around the world; the Chinese and various African groups. It is thus safe to assume that the present unpopularity of the pun is not fostered by its very nature, but is merely unfashionable in our society.

A number of previously unclassified types of humor are mistakenly grouped as puns by their similarities hinging on their use of grammar to incite humor—such *perceptual* wit relies not upon ideas, but words and the associations we make between word relations in language. For instance, the definition . . . "*Hanging*—a suspended sentence" . . . is clever due to the images "suspended" dangles before us. On the other hand, a joke on the same subject might be deemed funnier because of the situation involved:

Prisoner on the way to the gallows, trips on a step.

Guard: "Oops! Careful, Spike . . . you'll hurt yourself!"

This type of humor based on the meaning of words, rather than the words themselves could be termed *conceptual* humor. Note that the basic difference between the two examples quoted is that, to most of us, it is funnier for the man to be hanged, whereas, the abstract word "hanging" is not nearly as humorous as the morbid situation itself. From a grammatical point of view, the pun and its other allies in the field of perceptual humor are of considerable interest in that they revolve around all three branches of grammar: phonology, or the *sound* of the words; syntax or morphology, the *structure* of the language; and the semantics or *meaning* of words.

While the pun is generally equated with all other forms of perceptual wit, strictly speaking, a pun is a "witty play upon two or more meanings of the same word, or on two words of identical sound" (according to *Encyclopaedia Brittanica).* Furthermore a pun should contain two or more distinct meanings, one common and obvious, and the other more remote. For instance: "Did you hear about the butcher who backed into his meat-grinder? He got a little behind in his work." Obviously the pleasure (or pain) of a pun lies in the notice the mind takes of the relation between two sets of words and the surprise which the relation excites—in this example, the switch of "behind" from an abverb to a noun. Other puns are based upon homonyms or *homophones;* after all, we know that dog-catchers are paid by the pound.

The word "pun" is derived from the Italian word "puntiglio," meaning a fine distinction or a verbal quibble. Often examples of *paranomasia* (Greek for "similar name") are mistaken for true puns; paranomasia is based upon words of similar but not identical sounds. Example: "Did you hear about the nuclear scientist who ate too much and got atomic ache?" Or that mathematical stinker: "What did the acorn say when he grew up? Geometry!"

These two examples also exemplify a category which could best be described as the *fracture pun;* that is, a one-word unit which is split into a multi-word phrase (i.e., "Gee, I'm a tree!"). Fracture puns often follow a question/answer format:

"What is a metaphor? To keep cows in!" or
"When is a sailor not a sailor? When he's abroad."
"Why did the man know that his stomach ache wouldn't kill him? Because he couldn't digest yet."

In these examples, the syllables of the key words are fractured into a group of complete words.

Still another genre of pun is the *allusion pun,* one which hinges upon the listener's familiarity with persons, places, events, etc., mentioned in the witticism. A prerequisite knowledge is necessary for the impact of the allusion pun. If, for instance, a person has never heard of Peter Pan, he would not know that "Tinker Bell is a fairy." Or that:

"Tarzan swung with Cheeta."
"Rand McNally: Get lost!"
"Timothy Leary sends junk mail."
"Zorro has good marks."

Some puns allude to famous events in fact and fiction:

> "After the flood was over, Noah lowered the ramp of the ark for all the animals to leave. 'Go forth and multiply,' he told them. All the animals left except for two snakes who lay quietly in a corner of the ark. 'Why don't you go forth and multiply?' demanded Noah. 'We can't,' answered the snakes. 'We're adders.' "

Other puns allude to cliches—"A worm went to a picnic in a cornfield. It went in one ear and out the other.' '

Punning based upon people's names has been termed *prosonomasia* (i.e., "Dr. Sigmund Fraud"). A bumper-sticker slogan reads "Nix on Nixon;" a recent book was entitled *Good News, Bad News, and Agnews.* And we all know that "Richard Burton has an expensive Taylor." Pet owners can name their animals with prosonomasia in mind. How about a mouse named "Mousey Tung?" Or—boxer (Shorts); collie (Flower); gopher (Broke); rooster (Shire Soss); crow (Magnon); or a kitten (Kaboodle).

Some puns are formed by the *insertion* of additional words into a cliche or into a previously stated phrase:

"Honesty is the best foreign policy."
"Peace is a state of mind—of mind your own business."

The insertion pun often lends itself to a statement/question/restatement format:

Mr. A: "Uncle Joe was arrested for feeding squirrels at the zoo."
Mr. B: "Why was that?"
Mr. A: "He was feeding them to the lions."

Insertion puns are occassionally implied: the listener is expected to fill in a word which is not actually stated. The following political poem illustrates this well:

"The election is over.
The result is known.
The will of the people
Is clearly shown.
Let's forget the quarrels
And show by our deeds
We'll give our leader
All the help that he needs.
So let's all get together
And let bitterness pass.
I'll hug your elephant
And you kiss my donkey."
(Jackie Kannon)

One type of near-pun involves the switch of sounds from one word to another and vice versa; let us label this a *reverse pun.* "There's a new type of knife long enough to cut four loaves of bread at one time. It's called a four-loaf cleaver." Sometimes sounds are reversed nonsensically and then an elaborate fantasy is fabricated to justify a climactic reverse pun punch line:

> "Once upon a time there was a small country called Tridland full of tiny people called Trids. There was a mountain in Tridland where the Trids went to pick berries. But every time the Trids came near the top of the mountain, where the biggest berries grew, an evil giant chased them away and kicked them down the mountainside. Eventually the Trids grew tired of being kicked, so they decided to enlist help. A delegation of Trids went into a neighboring country to find a man of religion. Days later they returned with a rabbi who accompanied the Trids on their next berry-picking trip. As usual, the giant came and kicked all of the Trids down the mountain, leaving the rabbi standing where he was. The angry rabbi demanded, 'Aren't you going to kick me too?' The giant answered, 'Silly rabbi, kicks are for Trids.' "

If you have looked closely at most of the previously stated puns you may have noticed that puns often have characteristics of two or more categories; "Silly rabbi," while primarily a reverse pun, is derived from an allusion to a television commercial, plus it uses paranomasia with the "rabbi/rabbit" parallel. Any combination could occur — for instance, a reverse-fracture-allusion-insert-prosonomasia

pun, with multiple uses of any type, such as several allusions or fractures. Let's close this topic with a double-fracture quadruple pun with prosonomasical allusions and paranomasical overtones:

An American couple were touring the USSR. In Moscow they hired a soldier from the Communist Army to guide them. The soldier, named Rudolph, showed them Red Square.

Soon the husband said, "I think it's starting to snow, darling."

His wife said, "I don't think so. It seems like rain to me."

"No, I'm sure it's snow!" cried the man.

"It's not! It's rain!"

"It's snow!"

"Oh, let's ask the guide," the wife retorted. "He should know Russian weather."

"All right. Is this snow or rain, Rudolph?" queried the American man.

"It is rain, sir," answered Rudolph.

"I still say it's snow," grumbled the husband.

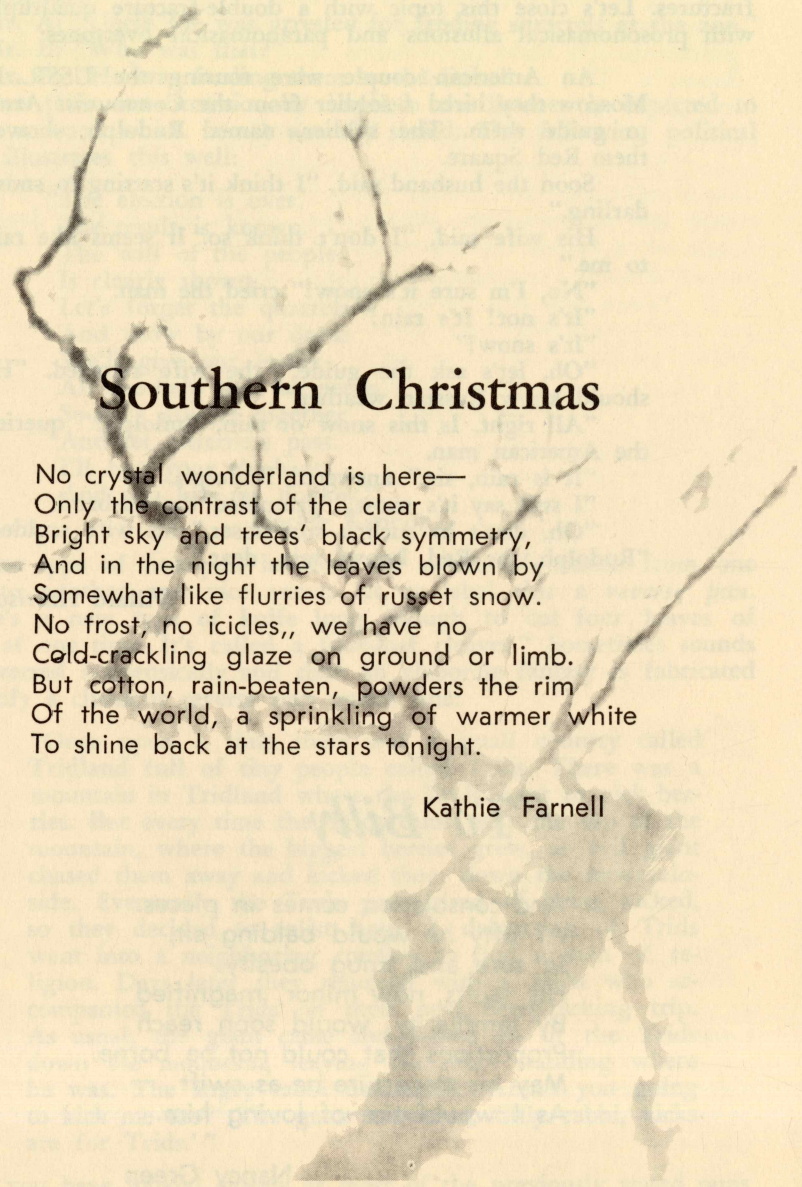
"Oh, don't be such a sore loser," his wife scolded. "Rudolph, the Red, knows rain, dear."

Willard Harrison

To Billy

And consolation comes in pieces.
At fifty he would balding sit,
In sure and smug obesity.
His faults, now minor, magnified
By familiarity, would soon reach
Proportions that could not be borne.
May his departure be as swift
As I would tire of loving him.

Nancy Green



Southern Christmas

No crystal wonderland is here—
Only the contrast of the clear
Bright sky and trees' black symmetry,
And in the night the leaves blown by
Somewhat like flurries of russet snow.
No frost, no icicles,, we have no
Cold-crackling glaze on ground or limb.
But cotton, rain-beaten, powders the rim
Of the world, a sprinkling of warmer white
To shine back at the stars tonight.

Kathie Farnell

The Crowd Looks Out at the Ice

by Edward Jackson

In the trunk and chained,
sunken beneath the ice;
inside the womb
sinking in sway
in frigidity

bubbles and displace until the
lake sediment murkiness is clouding out;
Stillness in artistic defiance,
shocking means to an escape;
seconds left to remove the handcuffs

Burlesque Proteus growing numb,
rapid—every motion timed and practiced,
propelled forth the willing slave and
the alter-ego abolishionist
in artistic conflict

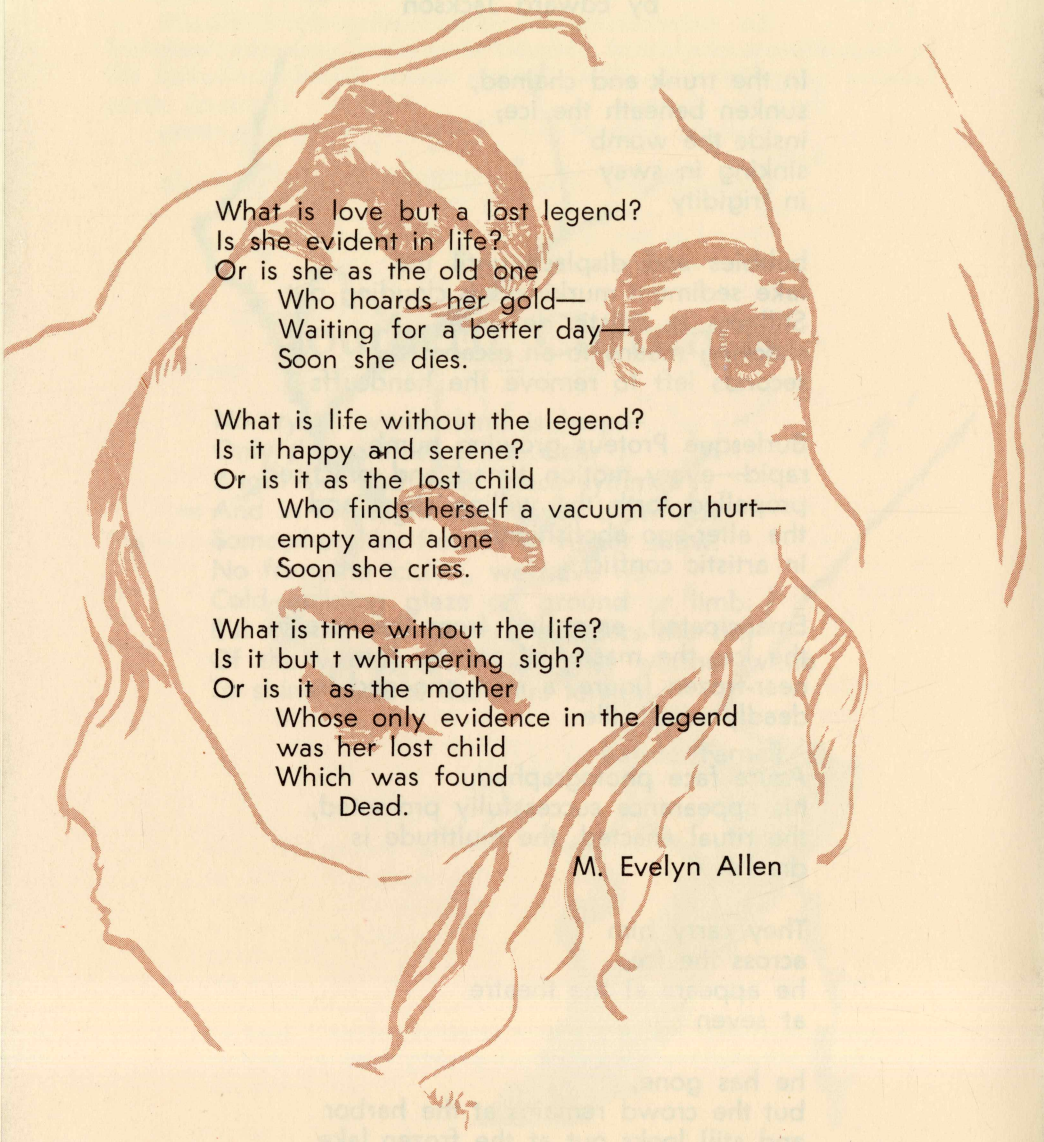
Emancipated, emerging from the hole in
the ice, the master of escape, the
near-frozen figure, a man engaged in
deadly vaudeville

Azure face photographed,
his appearance successfully promoted,
the ritual enacted, the multitude is
drawn

They carry him
across the ice,
he appears at the theatre
at seven

he has gone,
but the crowd remains at the harbor
and still looks out at the frozen lake,
still looks out at the ice

the hole has long since frozen over,
and the trunk remains at the bottom



What is love but a lost legend?
Is she evident in life?
Or is she as the old one
Who hoards her gold—
Waiting for a better day—
Soon she dies.

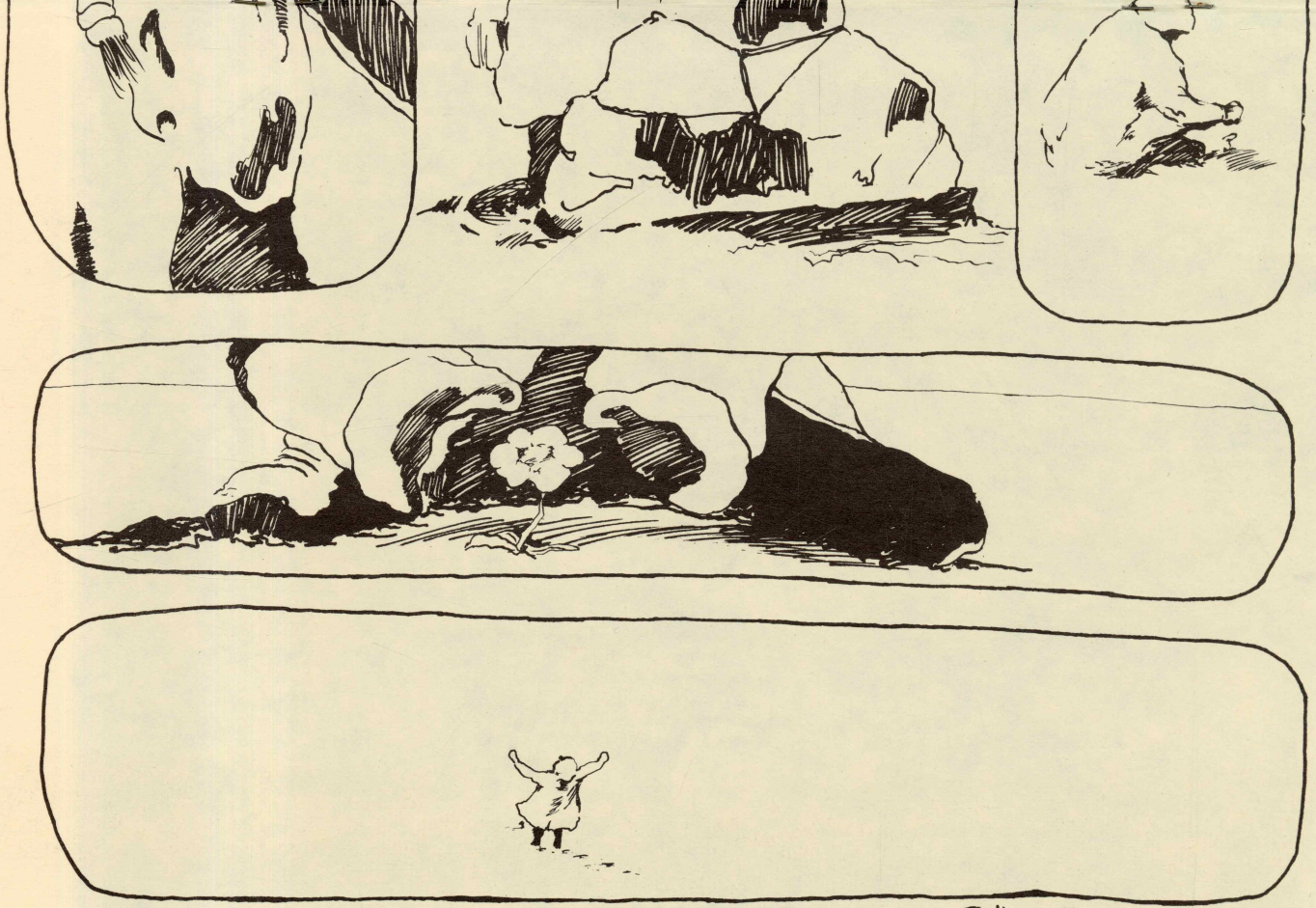
What is life without the legend?
Is it happy and serene?
Or is it as the lost child
Who finds herself a vacuum for hurt—
empty and alone
Soon she cries.

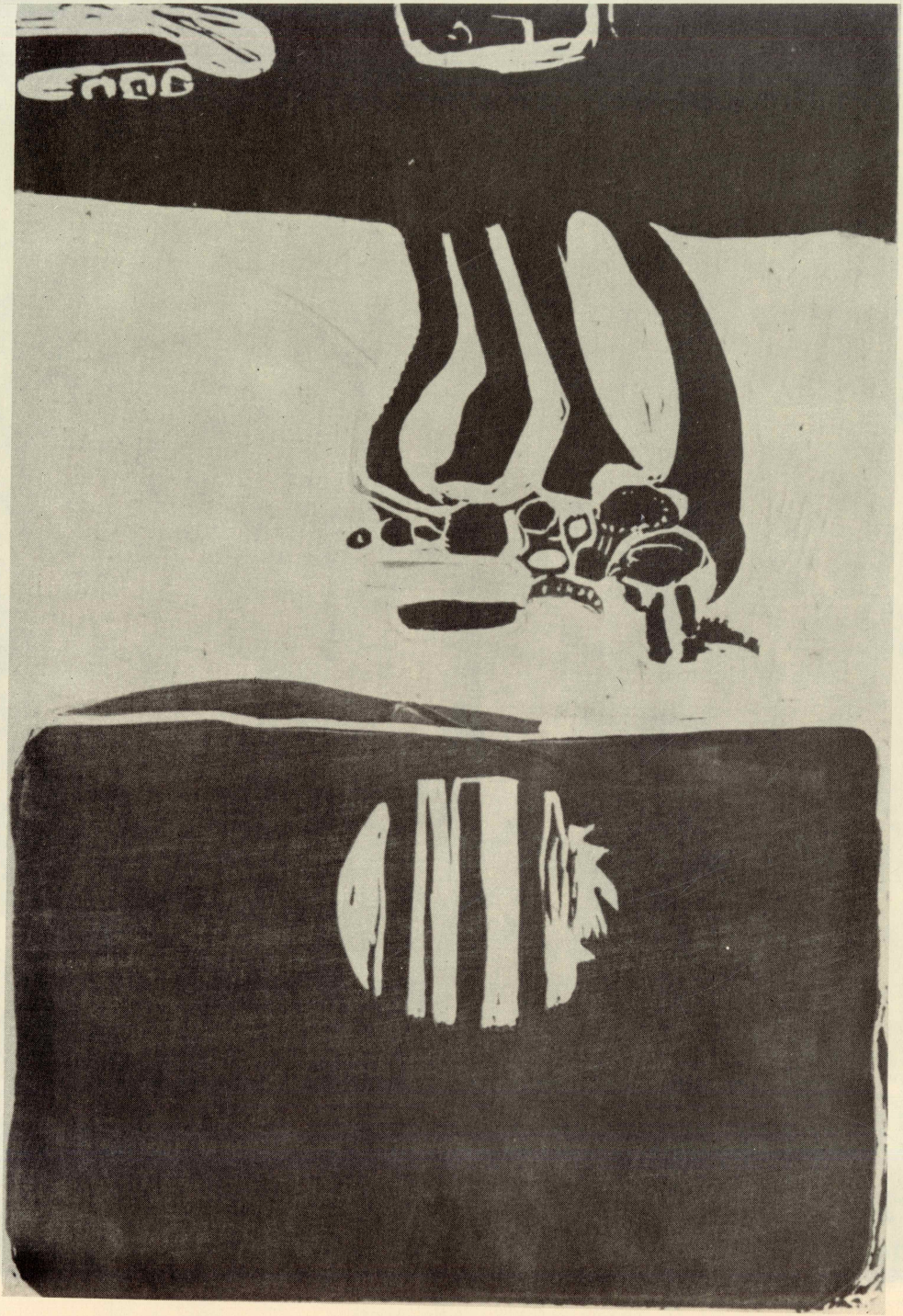
What is time without the life?
Is it but t whimpering sigh?
Or is it as the mother
Whose only evidence in the legend
was her lost child
Which was found
Dead.

M. Evelyn Allen

PHOTOGRAPHS . . .

SPRING


Gilbreath



A Sonnet on One Moment's Insight

A ray of light sifts through the cloudy haze,
Now breaking through between two evermores,
And I, in this one moment's insight's gaze,
Can grasp at life between two endless doors.
My heartbeat now transcends mere body's life
To grasp the meaning of my soul's existence;
To cut through mere existence as a knife
That cuts the fruit to strike into its essence.
This seed of life is my eternal soul
That now can see past numbness and past pain
Into the meaning of the heartbeat's goal,
And never more to think on life as vain:
Now living life in one true ageless breath
Surpassing my birth's past and future's death.

Peggy Donaldson

A Time To Love

Some love one at a time
while others love one all the time.
But the time for love should not be marked
by a cycle or by the convenience of
a dust powder lover.

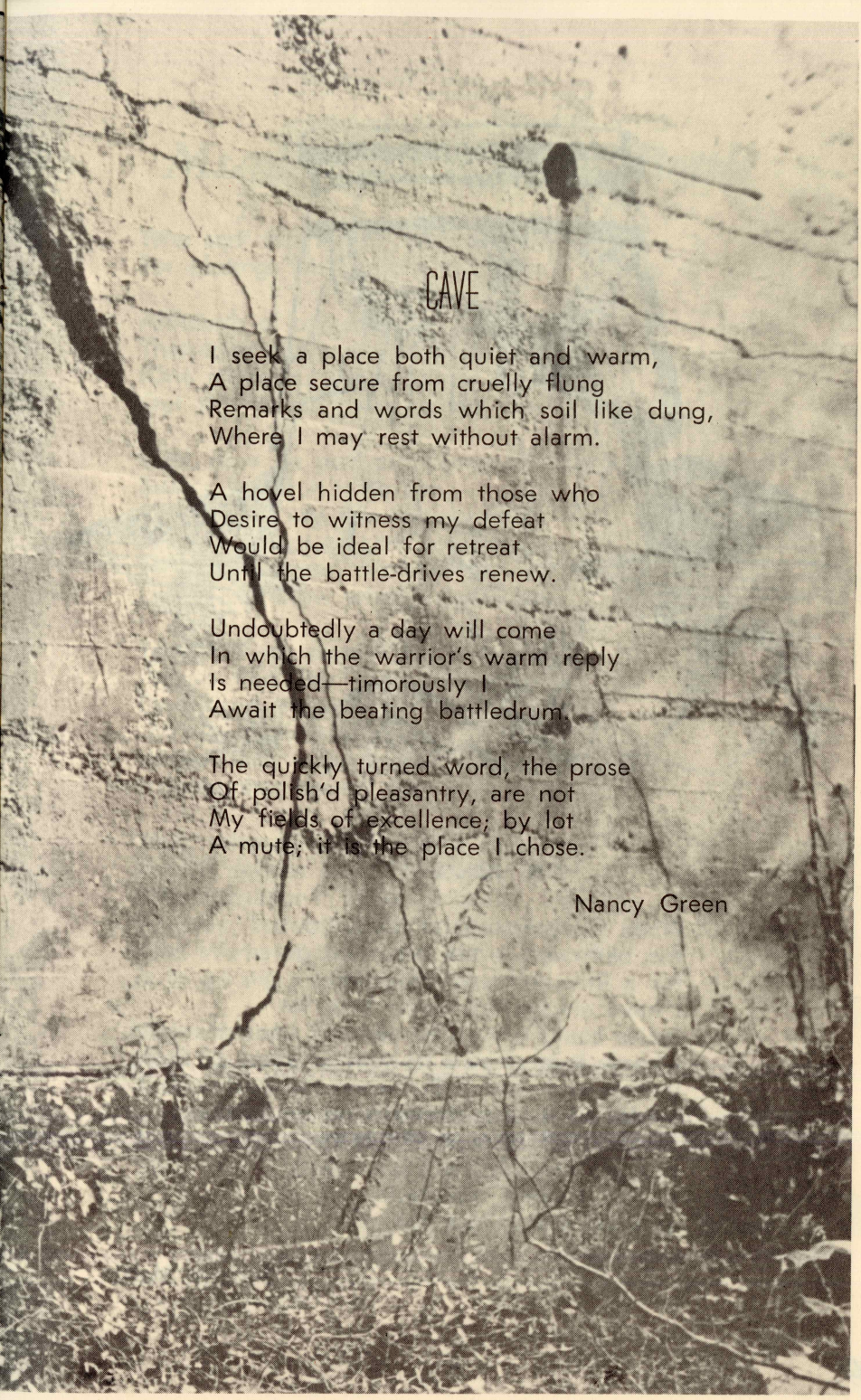
Tommy Martin

INTROSPECTION

Seven red stripes,
And six white;
An ordered constellation.
And there it is,
Loved and despised
And feared.
Paranoia.
Feelings grown through abuse
To mock their meaning,
Spontaneity of consciousness
Programmed into the void.
Dullness becomes sangfroid.
"And what,"
They say,
Remembering their checkbook,
The dreaded postman,
Children and newspapers,
All tucked into the chaos
Of survival;
Beyond—
A tag about their necks,
The limp arms of a young whore,
And sudden blood pain;
And beyond—
Schedules and deportment,
Knowledge compulsory,
Many faces receding
Into oblivion,
"Are our dues?"

Being told, they are at ease,
Facing a manifold comptroller,
And response at fulfillment.
The rebel or reactionary
Plays the game.
The stimulus is the same,
And punch up the adversary
As a victim.
Belles lettres is rubbish,
Waste.
Brahmin or brahman,
There is neither,
No direction save
The pastings
Of the chiaroscurist.
Random reasoning
And religion.
Dogma.
Millions of idle fingers
To support the dike.
Ever threatening,
Water rising.
Ignorance.
What chance to grow
When feet are rooted
In arid soil
And tears do not flow?
Remember Phlebas,
And hope for a similar fate,
Saying,
"It is not too late."
The mud is treacherous
And unclean.
Those submerged—
Their prayer is a gurgle.

Richard Bradley



CAVE

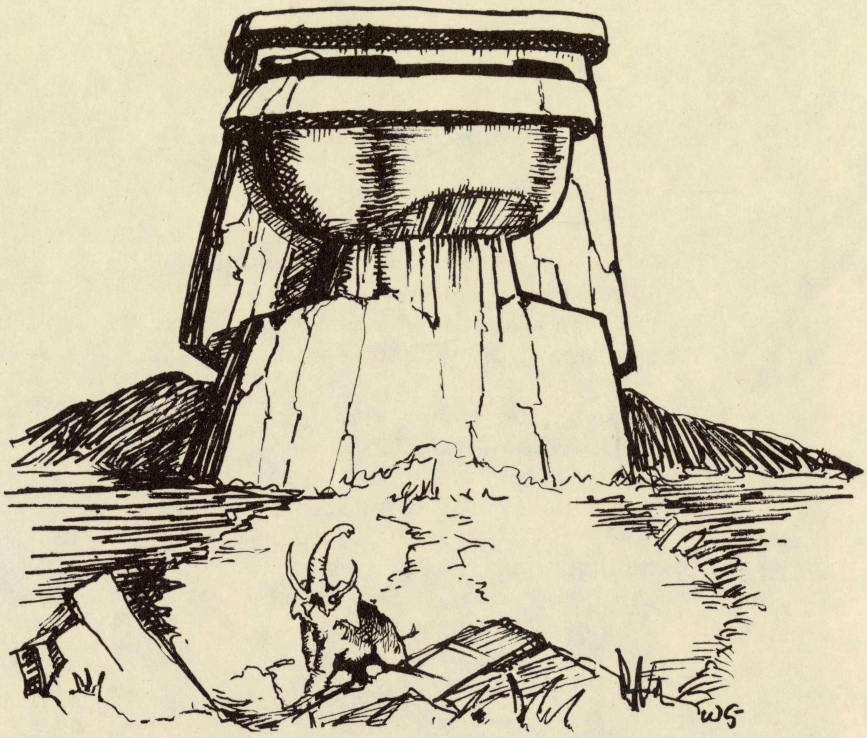
I seek a place both quiet and warm,
A place secure from cruelly flung
Remarks and words which soil like dung,
Where I may rest without alarm.

A hovel hidden from those who
Desire to witness my defeat
Would be ideal for retreat
Until the battle-drives renew.

Undoubtedly a day will come
In which the warrior's warm reply
Is needed—timorously I
Await the beating battledrum.

The quickly turned word, the prose
Of polish'd pleasantry, are not
My fields of excellence; by lot
A mute; it is the place I chose.

Nancy Green



THE JOHN

When the pressures of life build
the bathroom is the place we go
for a little rest and relaxation.
I have always wondered how fat
ladies could gracefully descend upon the john.
I know it must be a truly artful show of flesh,
motion and timing. But when the landing is
made, all is well. There is no doubt that
when a full account of history
is made the john will go down
as the greatest receptacle
of what people are full of.

Tommy Martin

Ms. Found With a Bottle

Who sent this letter? Who to blame
For placing "Ms" before my name?

Although of course I realize
That some prefer to go by Ms—(????)
(One moment, please, while we adjust
Our rhyme) As I was saying, Ms— (????)

Well, how **do you** pronounce it? Mize? Muss? Moos?
Sisters, I fear it is no use.
One cannot **say** this fish-nor-fowl
Without a hint of civil vowel
To help. Nor can the term survive
Unless we know whence it derives:

To wit, if we consult our histor-
-Y, we find "Mr" was "Mister"
Once; and (though the thought distress)
"Mrs" derives from (blush) "Mistress",
While "Miss"—but morals now are such
I doubt that unwed girls miss much . . .

Thus, whence comes "Ms"? Can it be
That it derives from "Misery?"
"Miscegenation? "Misanthrope?"
Anyway, Sisters, our only hope
(Else Women's Lib throw in the trowel)
Is to go dig up that missing vowel;

Hatch this chicken ere we counts it,
And figure some way to pronounce it.
Mize or moos or mess or muss
I leave you to your Thesaurus.
For me, the best solution is:
Since this is Dixie, call me Miz.

Kathie Farnell

HARRISON

The Gingko Tree

The tree was splendid in its autumn dress. It was a Gingko, and people came from all over town to see the shimmering gold halo it radiated each fall. It wasn't such a big tree, but as gingkos go it was a unique specimen. Some people said that it had been planted in an old French estate that had given away to middle-class houses a century before, and, that being the case, it was probably the oldets tree of its kind in the eastern part of the country. It was in a corner of a park—all that remained of a garden that had once been there, and the neighborhood was justly proud of it.

John sat beneath the tree and watched the traffic busily scurrying by on Dauphin Street. It was one of the first days that the autumn coolness beckoned people out of doors, and John chose to be alone to experience the absence of the fatigueing summer heat. Sitting with his legs crossed in mock Yoga fashion he looked up into the leaves of the tree—sometimes watching birds or a squirrel and sometimes lost in thought. It was so peaceful in the corner of the park that one could lose one's mind to wonderings with considerable ease, and that was obviously what he was doing.

It might be nice to know what he was thinking, but, unfortunately ESP is seemingly not prevalent in this generation. Yet his actions over the next few hours show that he was either lost in the reverie of love or was contemplating suicide—very similar feelings.

It was still early in the afternoon when John left the park and drove back to the college. He drove with the top down so he could feel the cool, almost cold, breeze and see the enfolding arms of the tree limbs as he drove beneath them. Entering the campus gates he drove through the narrow street between imposing Victorian structures to the dormitory fed by brick walkways from the parking lot and other points on the campus. The dormitory was like a giant womb that took in and gave off men at an astonishing rate, and John was caught up in the seminal flow of the schoolday crowd. He greeted several people on the way to his room but not very many, actually, considering that he had lived there for two years. The movement and the noise in the old ivy-covered building seemed foreign after the quiet solitude of the park, and John walked rapidly to his room. There he met his roommate, Charles, a small, thin, almost effeminate fellow whom John had chosen as a companion chiefly because of his quietness.

"Where've you been?" Charles inquired when John entered the room.

"Oh, riding around," he replied, "the weather is too nice to stay inside all day."

"Yeah it is. I went down to the college lake this afternoon. It was fantastic with all the ducks and geese."

John went across the room to his desk and started reading from a green notebook. They were both quiet for some time, and then John broke the silence. "Charles, what is the worst thing that could happen to you?"

"Huh? Oh, I guess flunking school or getting maimed in a car accident. Something like that."

"Well, what I meant is what if something emotional happened to you? What if all of a sudden you sensed that there was a side to you that you hadn't known about?"

"Oh, you mean like falling in love? You're in love with somebody? Christ!"

"No, I don't mean falling in love. It happens that I am in love with someone, but that in itself isn't the problem. I guess the problem is who I'm in love with."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, never mind. I was talking off the top of my head. Just forget it."

John stood up. "I have a class. I'd better get long. See you later."

"Later," Charles echoed.

He left the dormitory and decided not to go to his class. Instead he drove downtown and went to one of those bars nobody wants to be seen entering. Hesitating at first he entered a dimly lit room where the smell of beer and cigarette smoke mingled with that of stale air. It was almost empty—just a few older men sitting at the bar drinking beer. John went over to the bartender.

"Have you seen Cid?" he asked.

"Not since last night. He had a couple of drinks and then went off with some guy he was talking to here. He's probably at home, though. He quit his job yesterday."

"Thanks," John said, turning to leave, "see you later."

Walking out to his car he noticed the sky had become overcast though it didn't look like rain. He drove around downtown for awhile and then stopped in front of an old apartment building. The front door was plate glass—obviously an effort at renovation, but the steps were covered with rubber matting and the odor that lingered in the air was the musky scent of decades of occupancy. Cid's apartment was on the third floor—a walk-up since the elevator had been plastered over several years before.

John knocked on the door and waited, listening for sounds inside the room. Cid opened the door in a bathrobe. He was about thirty with long black hair that reached almost to his shoulders. He was above average in height and the robe couldn't quite conceal an excellent physique underneath. He seemed embarrassed to see John. In the room behind him was a young man who looked to be in his early twenties also in a robe stretched out on the sofa. A half-empty bottle of bourbon and two glasses were sitting on a coffee table nearby.

At first John didn't say anything. Then he handed Cid a folded note and said in a flustered manner, "Hello, Cid. Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt, but I really didn't expect you to be here. That's why I wrote the note. I'm late for class now, so I can't stay." Half turning, "Se you later?" He turned and walked down the hall to the stairwell. He was shaking when he got to his car.

Driving through the city was usually a horrible chore, but he hardly paid any attention to the traffic. Finally he turned down Dauphin Street and eventually same to the park with the gingko tree where he parked his car and got out. As he walked through the park he looked at the tree. It was almost dark now, and the halo effect was gone. It was still quite lovely, but the aura of spiritual essence was gone leaving only a tree where a golden vision had stood earlier in the afternoon.

Bobby Fussell

NIGHT-REFLECTIONS

The red star flickers,
A dying candle flame light-years away
Threatening to extinguish itself
And leave me starless,
Without direction.

The moon glides
Across the yawning grave of the heavens—
A treacherous guide yielding just enough glimmer
To slit the deep shadows.

The star is still there;
But I don't know how much longer
It will hold out
Against the cold breath of space.

I team the moon out of the sky
And break it like a china plate.
It will not shine for me again.

Gloria C. Neuffer

MONOLOGUE OF AN OLD MAN FROM HIS RESIDENCE AT AN ALABAMA HISTORICAL SITE

Like swell-footed Oedipus, we have walked in ignorance.
But who could blame us for not knowing?
We sat on cool piazzas and spoke of Plato and Leonardo;
We hung our paintings in interiors draped with crocheted pieces
and silken scarves;
We drank Benedictine from our great-grandfather's
liqueur glasses.
All as it should be.
And yet, before our veiled eyes, things were revolving,
Things we could not imagine, surely not acknowledge.
I once knew a man who held Oedipus accountable for
his ignorance.
He called it "culpable ignorance," and I thought, "What a
fine phrase."
But surely we cannot blame Oedipus any more than we can
blame ourselves.
Still one difference remains to trouble me.
When Oedipus learned the truth, he struck his eyes out,
The violence of a wife and mother's brooch.
But we have shrugged.
We are not like the great King Oedipus;
We do not recognize the horror of those sins we committed
without knowing it.
We are far more like the dirty and whining old Oedipus at
Colonus,
No longer admitting his responsibility,
But conceiving of himself as the victim, shuffled and carted
by the gods.

Norman R. McMillan

Reminiscing

When you and I were young, Maggie,
It was the twilight of the Age of Aquarius
The dawn of Sagitarius
When first we oped those eyes of cosmic blues,
Before we blew our minds with fission
Saw the psychedelic vision
And our gender wasn't something we could choose;
When we used sex to make our babies
(men were men and girls were Ladies)
And there were people called Italians, Poles,
and Jews—
When we had songs with words and tunes,
When we still ate with forks and spoons,
And when our brains were things that we knew how to use;
When there were books for us to read,
Fewer IBM's to feed,
When we had hearts that we could need
or break or lose . . .

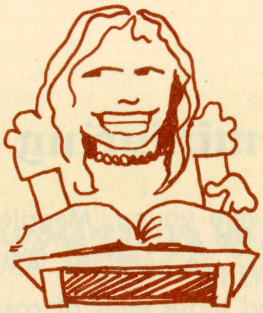
Those were the days, my dear
When we had Age to fear
And Death was always near
To cast his spell.
Now we may never die
So you can laugh—and sigh—
"So long ago, but I remember it so well."

Randall Curb

EPITAPH

Bury me with roses,
But please remove the thorns.

Gloria C. Neuffer



SEX AND THE SINGLE CHILD

Forward-looking realist that I am, I cannot repress a twinge of longing for the good old days when I view my little niece Scarlett's report card. Last six weeks, she was pleased and I was horrified to see that she had received an "A" in Sex Education I. The Youth Aid detective reported that she had cheated, but I threw away my copy of *Lolita* anyway.

In my day, of course, normal nasty-minded little kids were forced to cull whatever information they could concerning the birds and the bees from friends, magazines, and the dirty old man down the block. Life in those days had excitement—what modern-day fifth-grader could make a modest living out of giving guided tours of the Men's Room at the Morningview Baptist Church? For a while there I was the richest kid in Vacation Bible School. Of course, there were hazards, such as having your Show and Tell Society interrupted by a teacher. Nowadays, she would no doubt smile sweetly and supply the correct term for whatever we were referring to as a "you-know-what". I know what Miss Taylor would do. She would promptly arrange a meeting between everybody's respective you know what and her lead yardstick, without ever correcting our youthful misapprehensions about how we got to planet Earth and what we should do once we got here.

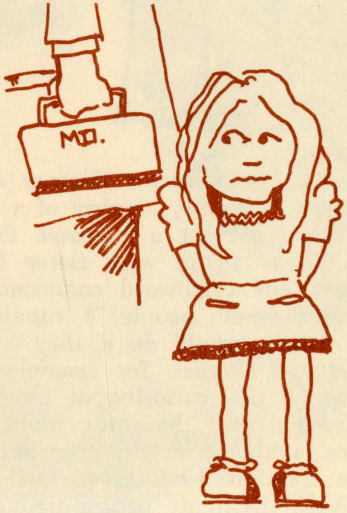
My brothers and I were first assumed to be deposited on the Farnell doorstep courtesy of a stork. "When we expressed disbelief following a scientific consultation of the World Book Encyclopedia and Audubon's Bird Book (both of which informed us that storks seldom voyage the skies of Alabama, with or without cargo), the story was modified to name our family doctor's little black bag as the source. This had a disquieting effect on me; thenceforth, whenever Dr. Brock pulled up in front of the house, I would mutter gloomily, "This means either a penicillin shot or another $%—%$ little brother."

Eventually, playground gossip led me to supplant my doctor theory with the popularly accepted one, not without some doubt—for one thing, the new term was listed neither in World Book nor in the Abridged dictionary. A field trip to the library to look it up in

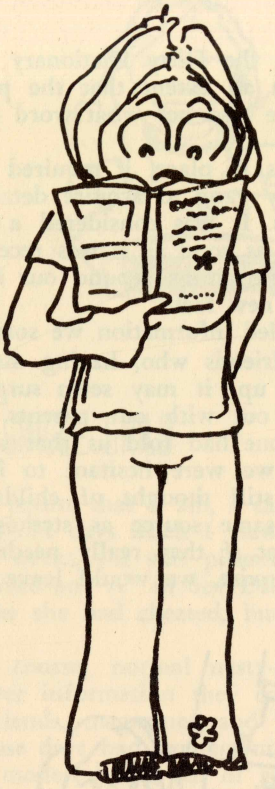
what we referred to as the Dirty Dictionary incited the suspicions of the librarian to such an extent that the project was dropped. I suppose I shouldn't have told her what word it was that I was trying to find.

With the basic facts in place, it required an intensive city-wide effort on the part of my gang to acquire details with which to embellish our conversations. It was considered a point of etiquette to pass on the information as soon as it was received; this accounts for the many telephone conversations around our house that began with "Hey! Ya wanna hear a new fact?"

In view of the garbled information we sometimes acquired, often through the agency of friends who, having discovered no new fact, proceeded to make one up, it may seem surprising that we never checked our hypotheses out with our parents. The reason for this lapse was simple—someone had told us that sex had been invented around 1950; therefore we were hesitant to broach the subject to people who apparently still thought of children as being airlifted or dispensed from the same source as stethoscopes and tongue-depressers. We figured that if they really needed to know anything, they could ask us. Otherwise, we would leave them with their illusions.



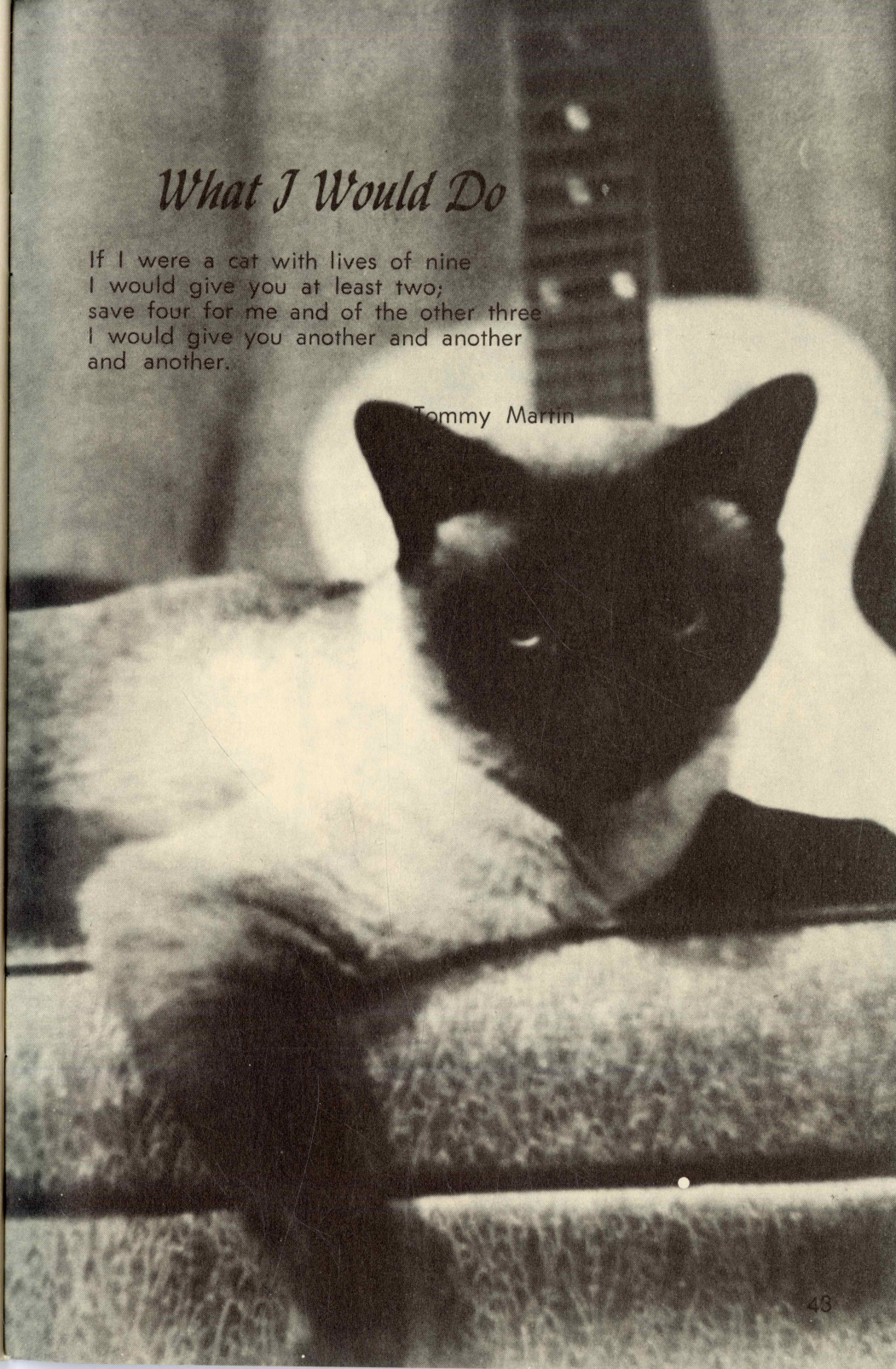
Although the coming generation will probably be deluged with reams of information on The Subject from the time they are old enough to understand Latin, I somehow feel that they will retain the "determined-band-of-scientists-alone-against-the-world" feeling that my gang had. Curiosity is a human trait, after all, and if there is nothing to be curious about, the logical thing to do is invent something. This fact accounts for the continuing interest professed by my contemporaries, most of whom have finally discovered that they were not found under a collard leaf. During my freshman year, our hall's



library acquired a copy of *The Sensuous Woman* and one of *Everything You Always Wanted to Know,* courtesy of a girl whose mother told her not to come back without a husband. For three weeks, it was the fifth grade all over again, with fierce literary arguments, liberal use of dictionaries, and catchword comments ("Hey! Remember the one about them Burmese people?") running rampant along the corridors. What that gang would do if they could see this year's batch of books—*The Happy Hooker,* for example—is an interesting thought. One reason for all this curiosity, of course, is that no one has had the opportunity to carry the information gleaned past the theoretical stage. We are familiar with the popular slogans for movies claiming, "Makes 'The Careless Concubine' look like 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm!' " Well, that's my gang's trouble. *We* make "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" look like "The Careless Concubine".

Continued research is imperative, however—as one biology major put it, "If you don't read the book, you'll flunk the lab." Scarlett may have earned her "A"—and I only hope that her mother doesn't provoke me into making that Hester Prynne joke I've been saving up—but I think my generation deserves an E—for Effort.

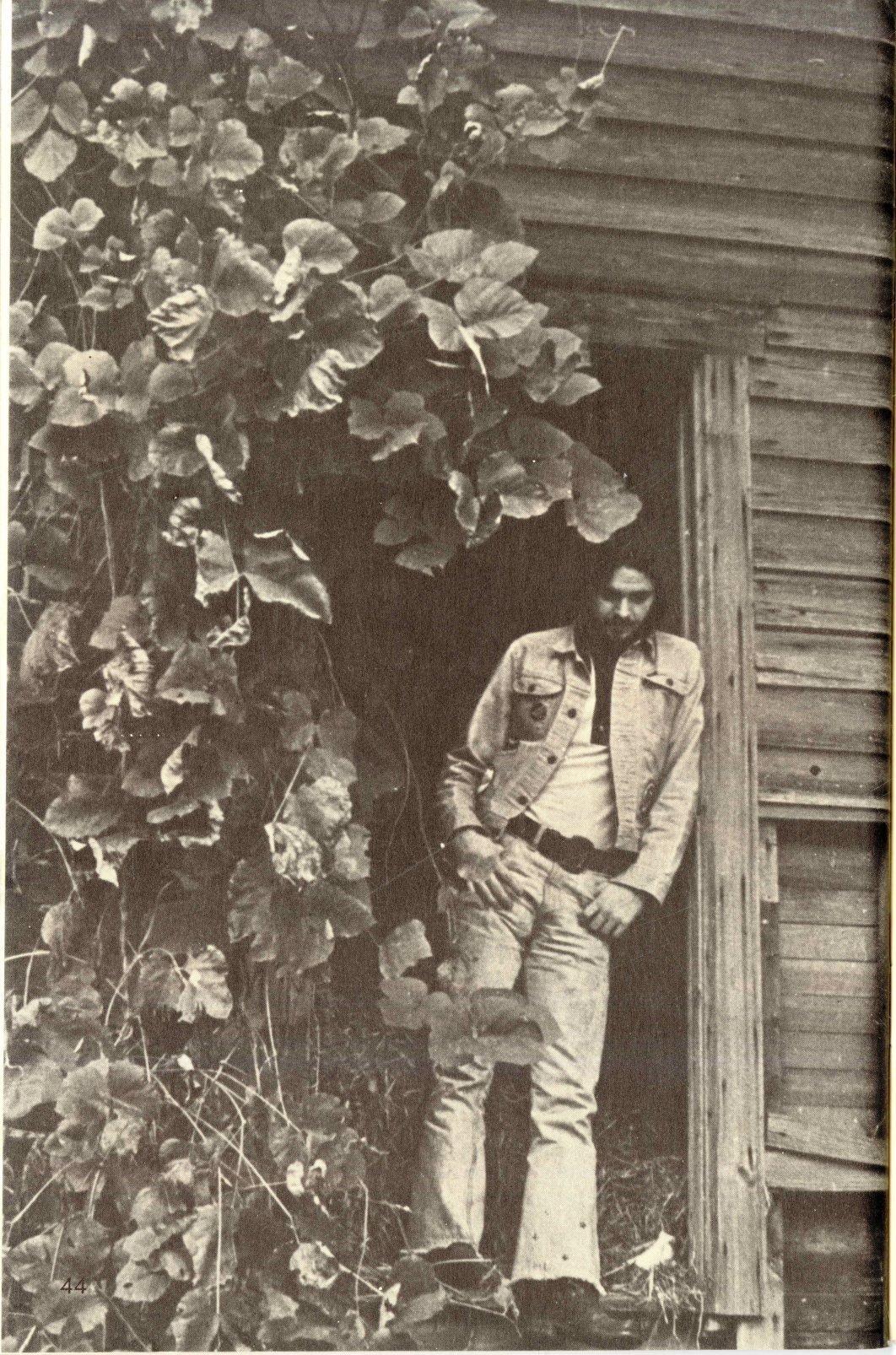
Kathie Farnell



What I Would Do

If I were a cat with lives of nine
I would give you at least two;
save four for me and of the other three
I would give you another and another
and another.

Tommy Martin



Talking to Myself

Beauty can't be looked upon forever,
though it may be eternal,
for I can never be

When the everlasting things don't everlast
I shall know
I shall go to bed alone and read a book
I shall learn the names of transient moths
Who ballet to the light above my head
I shall remember what my poet-being said
in brighter times.

When I have neither rhymes nor myself to sell
I shall tell the world a lie
and keep on living—and reliving—
until all the words have died
before my lips go into labor.

And staring into silences that act as mirrors to my icy gaze
I shall remember all-too-empty days
and think
Was it better to have lived never knowing what I wanted
than to live knownig I could never have what I did want?
Was I any better than the common slut
who grasps the night and keeps it until morning
never scorning the dawn
knowing her 'love' is meaningful by its sheer meaninglessness?

For Love was just an acquaintance I made on a bus
And when there were but the two of us
There were so many more,
So unlike the stranger and the whore
Who are forever two.

And when the final book is read
And when the insect dance is done
I ask myself
How could I have missed all this
Before the stars went home?
And how could I have known?
Oh, how could I have known?

Randall Curb

Darkness falls
  the thunder lifts its voice
and cries through matchstick bombs
and echoes through future tombs
  now empty graveyards
                jungle hillsides,
where children play
          brothers yet separated
by a fear not even their own

And trembling with ignorance
  are we
of their yearning
like our yearning
for each other
to exist within a harsh emptiness

And we build these backfires
                battles
to quell the oncoming war
and when the dikes melt
the only dam left is the human heart
but even then the barrier of the mind
must be broken

Mike Quattrini

In Cloister

From blueglass windows
we watch the sons of Man
and kneel to beg forgiveness for their sins
at crimson-tained altars.

from golden chalices
we drink the blood of Lambs
and raise our gasping alleluia hands
toward bacchanalian heavens.

For brothers are we all
(and whores are people too),
so from our holy cloisters ring
the requiems for whosoever wanders by our walls.

On sacrificial beds
we place ourselves in trial
of our own self-denial
and win,
and in the winning find a new beginning
in our death.

Our death is yet our life,
our life but can't,
and so we plant our hearts in sterile soil
that they might never grow,
might never know
the loves, the lusts of Man.

* * *

At blueglass windows
we sit at close of day,
and hungrily watch the sinners
as they prey.

Randall Curb

Go soft on the gentle spirit,
Do not force its quiet soul;
Like the butterfly in freedom
It thrives on beauty, light and air.

Gloria C. Neuffer

T7.1-3